

The Serengeti North Road Project

A Commercial Road through Serengeti National Park
jeopardizes the Integrity of a World Heritage Site.
Alternative Routes could easily meet the economic needs and even
improve the Conservation Status of SNP



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Background to the Commercial North Road Project




The History: The road was first discussed and put for financing to the World Bank about twenty years ago but based on the recommendation of an EIA carried out by the WB, it was abolished for environmental reasons.

The Present: According to articles in the local press and a statement from the Communications Officer of Tanzania National Parks, the Tanzanian Government is planning to build a commercial road cutting directly through the Serengeti wilderness, which completely bisects the path of the world famous annual wildebeest and zebra migration comprised of nearly 2 million animals.

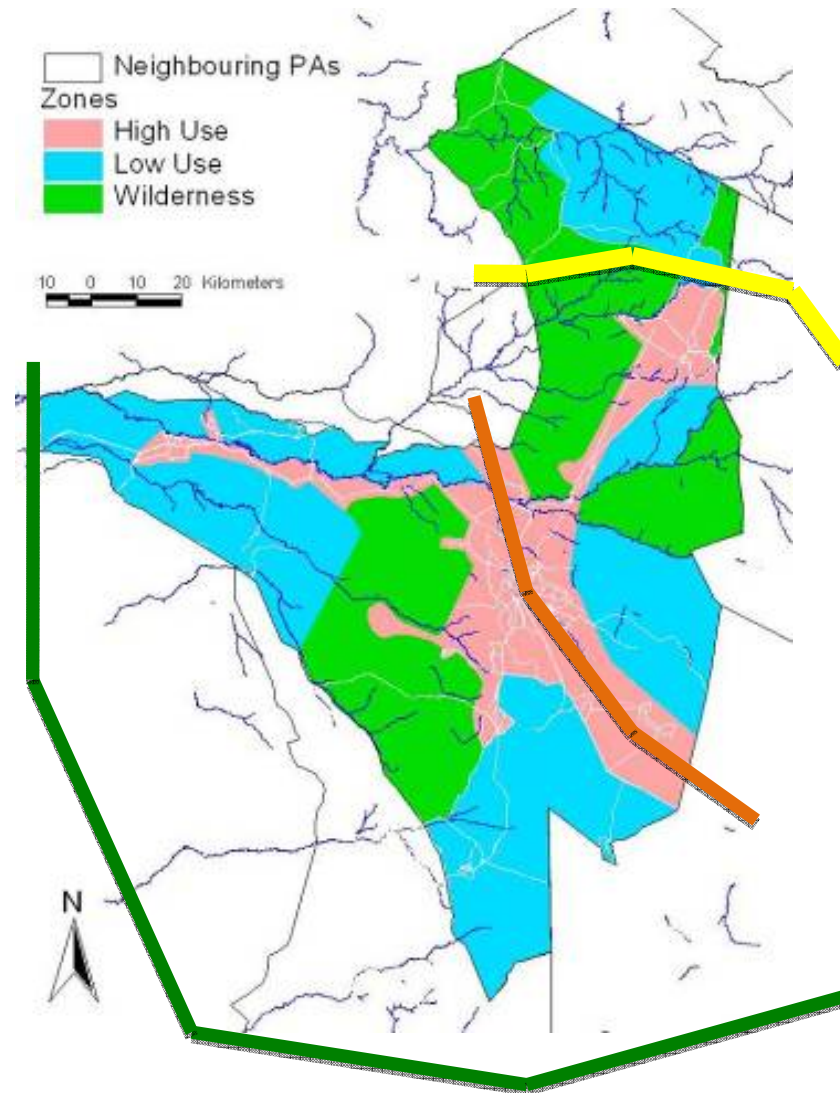
The Need: To better link Serengeti- and Loliondo-Districts to the National grid of major roads. The proposed road is suggested in the Governments 10 years Transport Sector Improvement Program (TSIP). That need of both Regions is undisputed but can be solved without dissecting the Serengeti.

The Problem: The presently suggested routing of the commercial road is for 53 kilometers running through the Serengeti National Park, dissecting the northern Wilderness area of the Park. Giving the increasing traffic, the road might become the highest risk to the wildebeest migration and the integrity of the Serengeti as the number one natural wonder of the world upon which Tanzania's tourism depends.

The Serengeti Roads

-  Existing non-public tourist access and through-road, central
-  Planned public through-road, north
-  Approximate alignment of alternative road

The wilderness areas are a critical habitat for endangered species like rhinos and wild dogs – the Serengeti Management Plan allows no commercial roads at all in these areas.



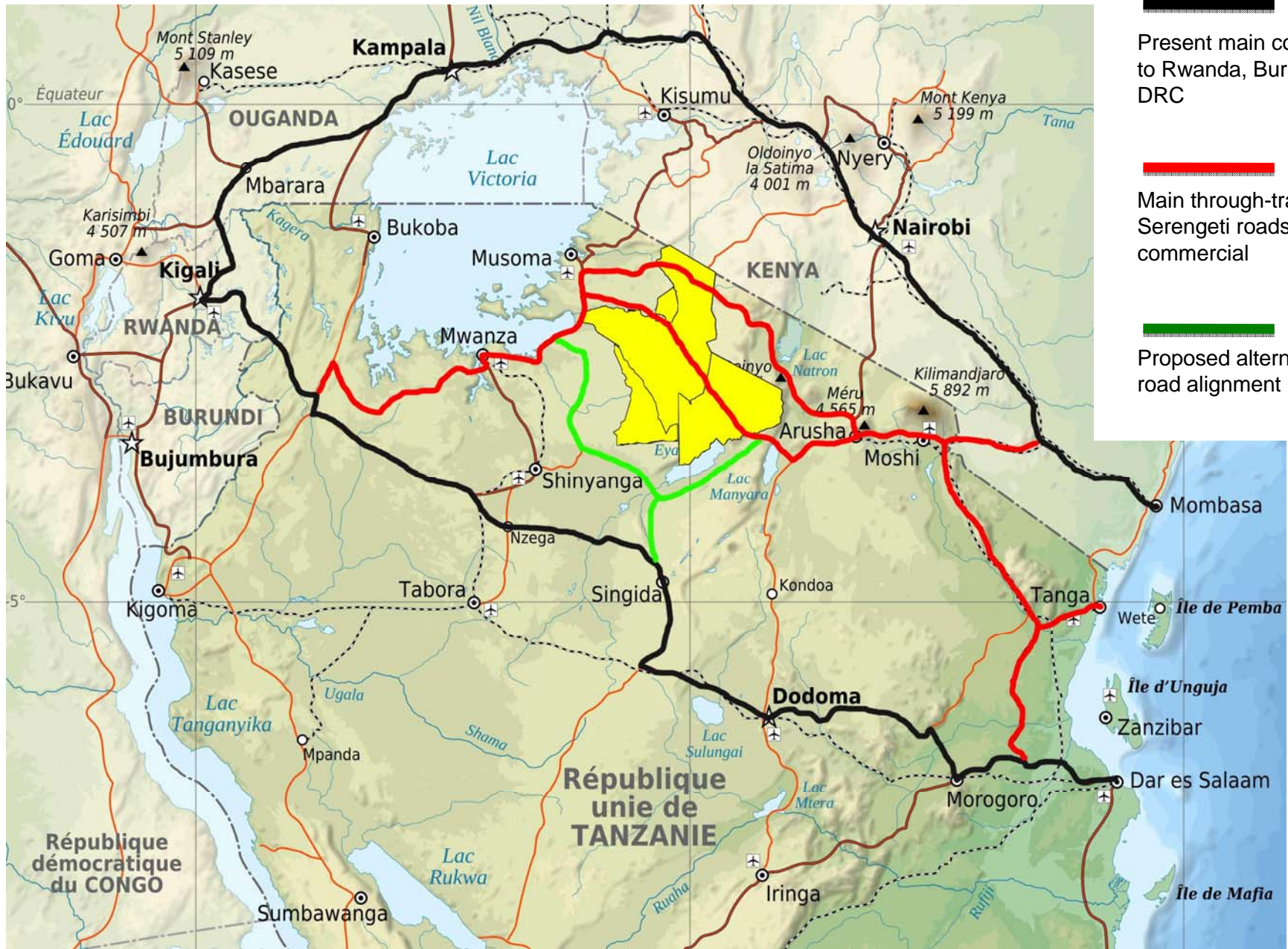
Commercial Roads in wildlife areas have proved a disaster all over the world and UNESCO is very strongly recommending that no through roads should lead through a National Park / WHS.

The planned Serengeti road in the future

“If you build a road – you will have increasing traffic!” That is true everywhere in the world.

Rwanda, Burundi and Eastern DRC have no rail links and are dependant on the northern road link from Mombasa and the southern link from Dar es Salaam. Once a tarmac road is built that links the existing tarmac Musoma – Mwanza Road to Arusha it will be the best and easiest link between Mombasa Port with Rwanda, Burundi and Eastern Congo and will almost certainly attract large amounts of heavy long-haul traffic.

Presently 6 million tons are moved on these roads to central Africa every year, on 150,000 truckloads, that are on average 416 large trucks a day potentially rumbling through Serengeti. This road traffic is increasing year on year. (Africa Trade growth as per 2009 is 30% per annum. WTO)



Present main commercial roads to Rwanda, Burundi and Eastern DRC

Main through-traffic roads if Serengeti roads will become commercial

Proposed alternate southern road alignment

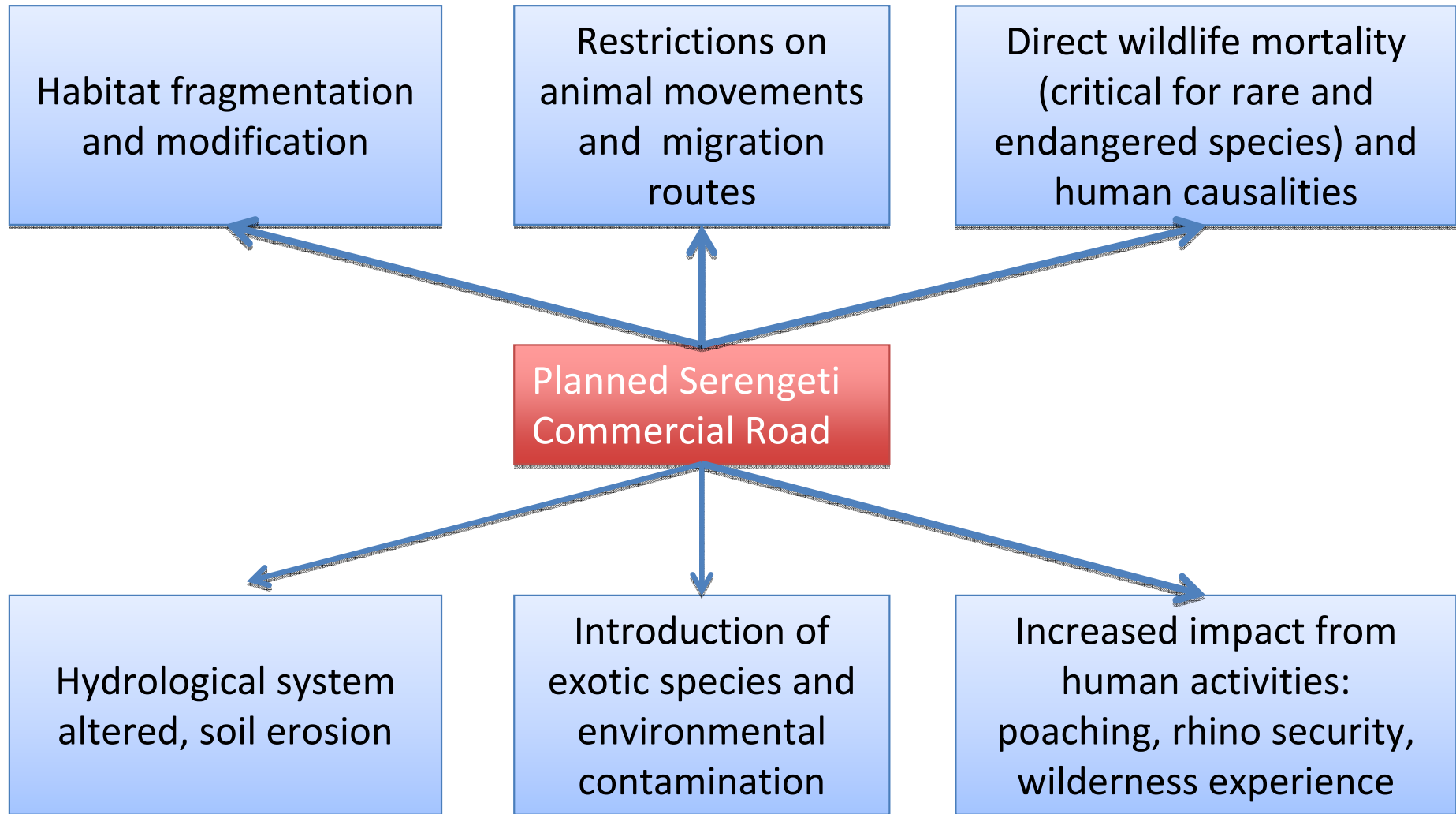
The major reasons for not having a commercial road through the Serengeti National Park



Photo: Anup Shah

- In contradiction to the World Heritage Convention, the TANAPA Policy and the approved Serengeti General Management Plan
- Strong negative impact on Tanzania's reputation as world leader in conservation
- Direct negative impact on tourism revenue in Serengeti and countrywide.
- Direct negative impact on the ecology, wildlife, migration, wilderness, security and outstanding universal value of the Serengeti
- Degradation of the iconic value that the Serengeti has in the world as the greatest wildlife natural area

Direct impact of proposed road



Wildlife – Vehicle Collisions

Wildlife – Vehicle collisions on a commercial road will take a heavy toll on Wildlife but even more so on people and equipment.

With many thousands of wildebeest crossing the road, the damage to property and the loss of human life is expected to be much higher than in Mikumi.

In Europe roads through wildlife areas are the cause of more than 300 fatal accidents and over 1 billion \$ loss of equipment.



Photo: Okapia

The Wildebeest Migration and the new Road

Initially the new road will not have a great impact on the Wildebeest Migration. But the Wildebeest Migration will have a great impact on the traffic. Increasing traffic will result in an increasing toll on human life and equipment through vehicle - wildlife collisions. These - unacceptable - losses will force TanRoads to consider fencing. Such fencing would truly mean the end of the Great Migration as the wildebeest, zebras and eland could not reach the Mara River (their only water source in the dry season) anymore and would die at the fence-line. Botswana lost its wildebeest and zebra migration with such fences. And in Canada, the elk migration in Banff National Park was also compromised because of a dissecting road

The loss of the Serengeti Migration – the last of its kind in the world - would not only mean the end of Tanzania's priceless natural and national heritage, the end of the Serengeti as iconic World Heritage Site but also a significant decline in tourism in the Serengeti and in neighbouring Masai Mara Reserve in Kenya.

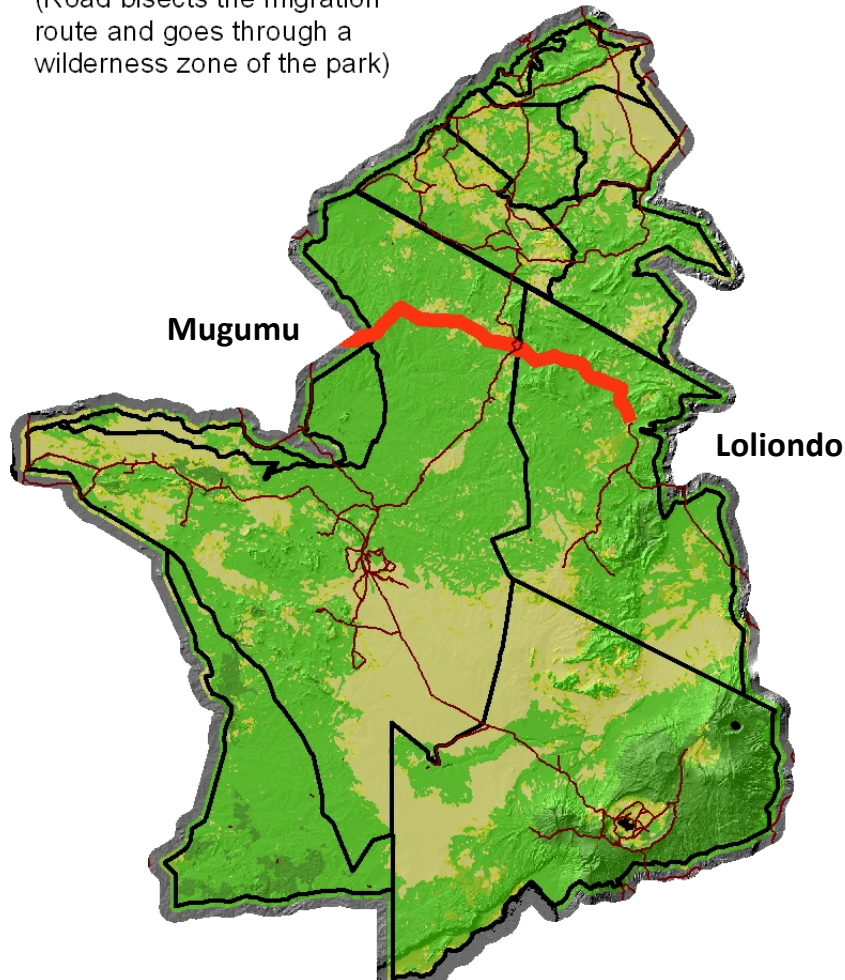


Planned Commercial Road through Serengeti and the world famous Wildebeest Migration

Serengeti Ecosystem

Proposed Route for New National Transit Road

(Road bisects the migration route and goes through a wilderness zone of the park)



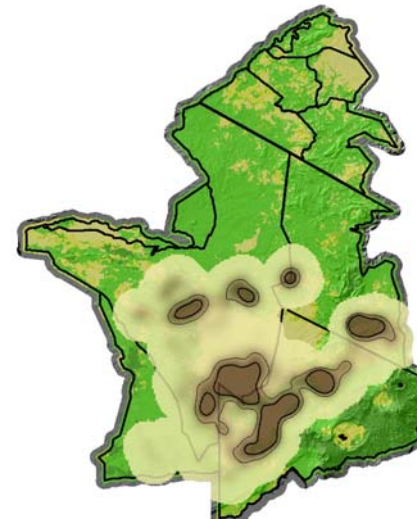
Serengeti Ecosystem

Wildebeest Dry Season Range



Serengeti Ecosystem

Wildebeest Wet Season Range

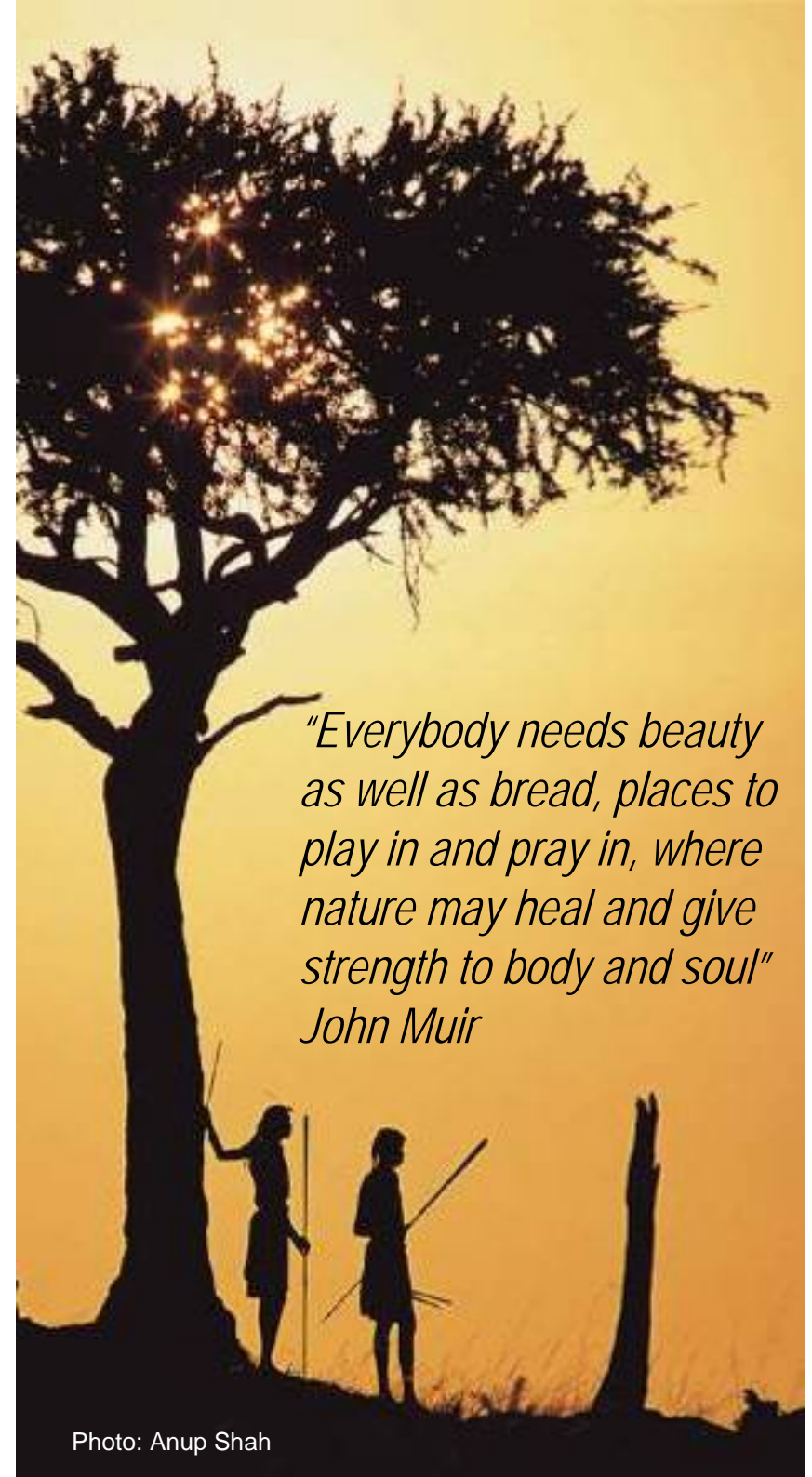


Impact on Tourism

The most important reason tourists are visiting the Serengeti is man's longing to be part of nature, his eternal search for wilderness and paradise.

Serengeti is the last place on earth that represents how the world looked a million years ago.

A tarmac road with lorry traffic destroys this illusion. The attraction that the Serengeti has in the world will be lost and with it the admiration for Tanzania and the income from tourism, presently the number one forex earner in the country. (Over 1 billion \$\$ in 2009, over 600,000 people employed)



"Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul"
John Muir

Serengeti as World Heritage Site

The Operational Guidelines of the World Heritage Convention states:

- The State Party is obliged to demonstrate that any new development will not impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.
- A Environmental Impact Assessment must be carried out that clearly demonstrate that the planned Serengeti road will have no impact on the values and integrity of the site.
- The State Party must submit such an EIA to the World Heritage Committee before taking a decision on the development.
- A development that leads to the loss of an Outstanding Universal Value could lead to down-listing or even deleting of a site from the World Heritage List, with potentially grave impact on a countries reputation and tourism trade.

In a meeting of Heads of Parks from 14 African countries in the Krueger National Park there was unanimous agreement that no commercial roads should lead through National Parks.

UNESCO recommend strongly that existing commercial roads should be relocated outside Parks and that new ones should be routed around Park boundaries.

The importance of TANAPA sovereignty on all National Park Roads

National Policies for National Parks in Tanzania: Article 9.10.1. “Park roads are not intended to provide fast access and **will not be planned, designed, or constructed if it can be demonstrated that such a road will create THOROUGHFARES through parks that will generate or attract non-park related activities and traffic.**”

TANAPA, on the parks road network is enforcing:

- Strict speed limit of 50 km an hour
- No night driving
- No off-road driving
- Restriction on size of lorries
- Pollution and waste disposal

As demonstrated in Mikumi National Park (and in other parks worldwide) such control is not possible on a commercial road.



Traffic through national parks does not only affect wildlife, but also has an impact on people. Accidents are likely to be numerous during the wildebeest migration when literally thousands of animals can be on the road. This will inevitably lead to loss of human life.

The economics of different road alignments linking Arusha and Musoma Region

	North	South
App. distance of new tarmac	421 km	383 km
Number of people served along new roads (TBS)	431,000	2,278,000

Not only is the proposed road likely to impact the iconic status of the Serengeti but the southern road is shorter and would provide access for:

- More agricultural markets – the southern road passes through important agricultural areas in Tanzania, the northern road does not
- Over 5 times as many people could be serviced

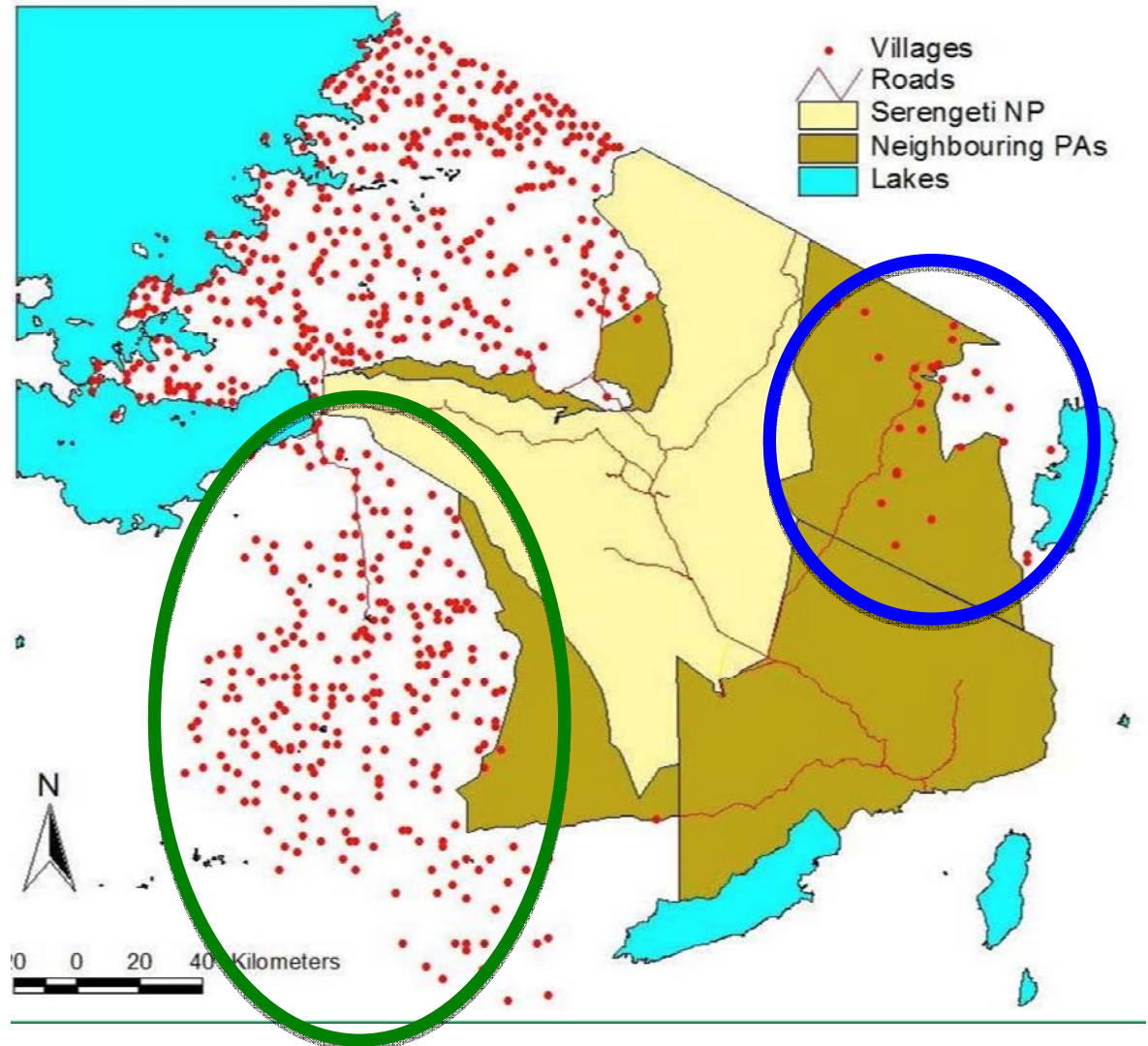
This would provide a major opportunity to increase agricultural output and distribution across Manyara-, Shinyanga- and Mwanza-Regions

Economics of North- versus South- Road Alignment

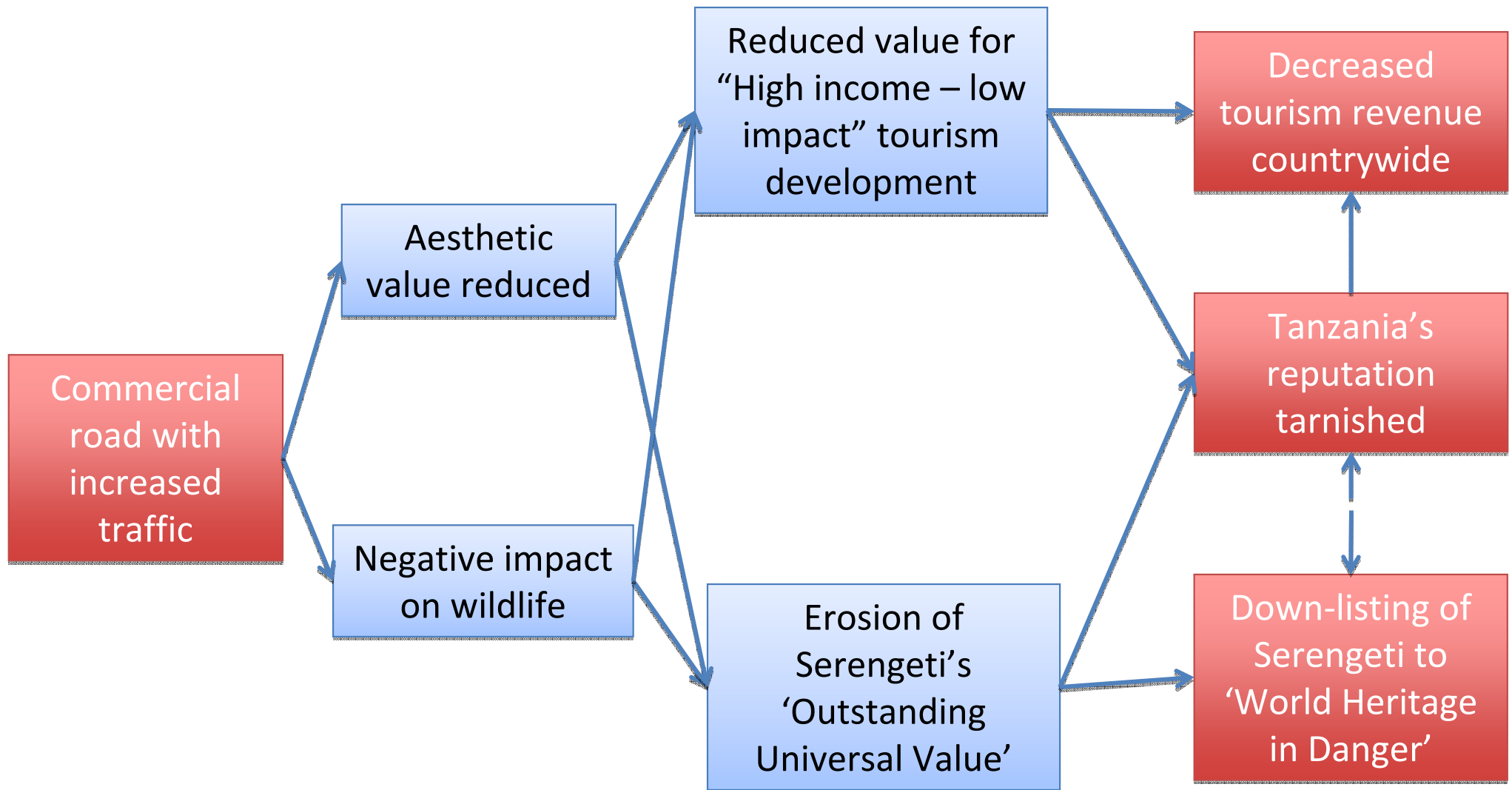
Villages to be connected to market by new road

 North Road

 South Road



Consequences of Proposed Serengeti Road



Way forward

The only way to avoid to severely reduce the conservation and economic value of the Serengeti National Park, its status as a World Heritage Site and endangering and damaging Tanzania's reputation as world leader in conservation is to look for another alignment of the road outside the National Park

With the bad situation in Mikumi National Park as an example the Government of Tanzania rejected other proposal of major public road building in Parks as recently in the Tarangire National Park. A road through the Serengeti would provide even more human fatalities and wildlife impact than the road through Mikumi

- As suggested by a world bank study and Tanzania National Park, the planned road should be routed around the Serengeti National Park to the south. (The existing Ngorongoro – Serengeti road will remain as a tourist access road only)
- The southern version makes more economic sense as it will be serving over two million people
- It will not impact on the value of the world famous Serengeti National Park and World Heritage Site but immensely contribute to the economic development of Karatu, Meatu, Maswa, Bariadi and Magu – Districts
- The road from Arusha to Loliondo should be rehabilitated to link Loliondo efficiently

Any road in the Serengeti National Park should be for for tourist access and park management – not for transit and has to be under the control of TANAPA, including gates, no night driving, avoiding critical areas for conservation, low speed..

Way forward

- Plan and build the south road tarmac connection from Karatu to join the existing Shinyanga - Musoma Road at Meatu.
- Upgrade the existing Shinyanga Murram road to Tarmac from Meatu to Lamadi
- Upgrade the Arusha - Loliondo Road
- Close the existing murram National Park Road through Seronera for commercial through-traffic and designate it for tourism access
- Improve the Musoma – Mugumu access road

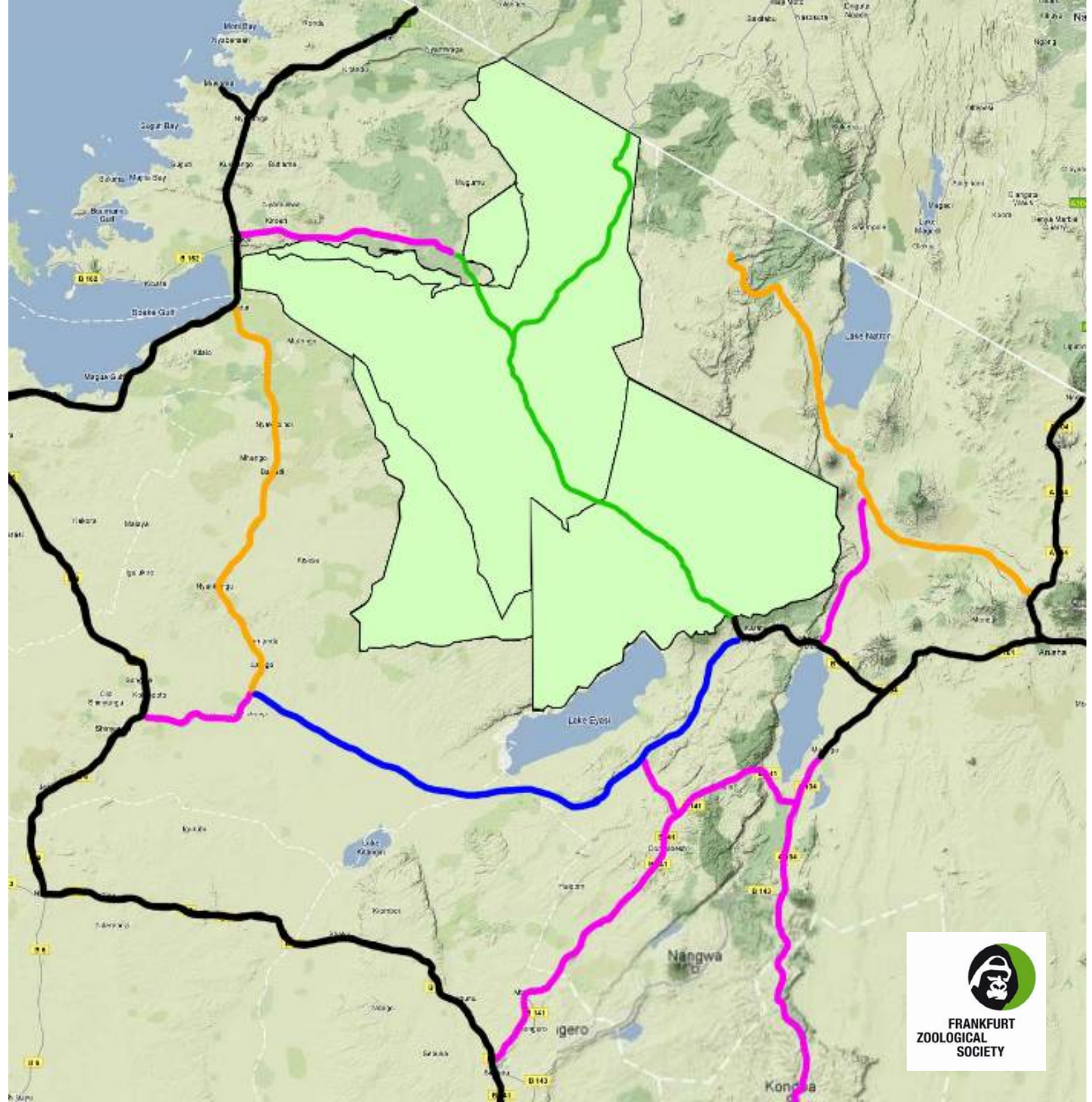
See following map



Photo: Anup Shah

Way forward: the proposed South Road alignment

-  Existing Tarmac Roads
-  Existing Murram Roads
-  Existing murram roads that need upgrade
-  Proposed south Road
-  National Parks road, tourism access only





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